

Interpol

The **International Criminal Police Organization – INTERPOL** (abbreviated as **ICPO–INTERPOL**), commonly known as **Interpol**^[3] (UK: /'ɪntərpəl/ /ɪn-tər-pol/, US: /-pəʊl/ -pohl^[4], stylized in all caps), is an **international organization** that facilitates worldwide police cooperation and crime control. It is the world's largest international police organization. It is headquartered in **Lyon**, France, with seven regional bureaus worldwide, and a National Central Bureau in all 196 member states.^[5]

The organization today known as Interpol was founded on 7 September 1923 at the close of a five-day International Police Congress in **Vienna** as the **International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC)**;^[6] it adopted many of its current duties throughout the 1930s. After coming under **Nazi** control in 1938,^[7] the agency had its headquarters in the same building as the **Gestapo**.^[8] It was effectively stagnant until the end of **World War II**.^[7] In 1956, the ICPC adopted a new constitution and the name Interpol, derived from its **telegraphic address** used since 1946.^[3]

Interpol provides investigative support, expertise and training to law enforcement worldwide, focusing on three major areas of **transnational crime**: **terrorism**, **cybercrime** and **organized crime**. Its broad mandate covers virtually every kind of crime, including **crimes against humanity**, **child pornography**, **drug trafficking** and production, **political corruption**, **intellectual property infringement**, as well as **white-collar crime**.^[9] The agency also facilitates cooperation among national law enforcement institutions through criminal databases and communications networks. Contrary to popular belief, Interpol is itself not a **law enforcement agency**.

Interpol has an annual budget of €142 million (\$155 million), most of which comes from annual contributions by member police forces in 181 countries. It is governed by a General Assembly composed of all member countries, which elects the executive committee and the president (currently **Ahmed Naser Al-Raisi** of the **United Arab Emirates**) to supervise and implement Interpol's policies and administration. Day-to-day operations are carried out by the **General Secretariat**, comprising around 1,000 personnel from over 100 countries, including both police and civilians. The Secretariat is led by the secretary-general, currently **Valdecy Urquiza**, the former vice president of Interpol for the Americas.^[10]

Pursuant to its **charter**, Interpol seeks to remain **politically neutral** in fulfilling its mandate, and is thus barred from interventions or activities that are political, military, religious, or racial in nature and from involving itself in disputes over such matters.^[11] The agency operates in four languages: **Arabic**, **English**, **French** and **Spanish**.^[5]

History

Until the 19th century, cooperation among police in different national and political jurisdictions was organized largely on an ad hoc basis, focused on a specific goal or criminal enterprise.^[12] The earliest attempt at a formal, permanent framework for international police coordination was the [Police Union of German States](#), formed in 1851 to bring together police from various German-speaking states. Its activities were centered mostly on political dissidents and criminals. A similar plan was launched by Italy in the [1898 Anti-Anarchist Conference of Rome](#), which brought delegates from 21 European countries to create a formal structure for addressing the international anarchist movement. Neither the conference nor its follow up meeting in St. Petersburg in 1904 yielded results.



Interpol headquarters in the [6th arrondissement of Lyon](#), France

The early 20th century saw several attempts to formalize international police cooperation, driven by increasing international travel and commerce, which facilitated transnational criminal enterprises and fugitives on the run.^[13] The first major effort was the

International Criminal Police Organization [\[show\]](#)



INTERPOL



Common name	Interpol
Abbreviation	ICPO-INTERPOL
Motto	<i>Connecting police for a safer world</i>
Agency overview	
Formed	7 September 1923
Preceding agencies	First International Criminal Police Congress (1914) International Police Conference (1922) International Criminal Police Commission (1923)
Employees	1,050 (2019)
Annual budget	€176 million (2023)
Jurisdictional structure	
International agency	
Countries	196 member states
Governing body	General Assembly
Constituting instrument	ICPO-INTERPOL Constitution and

International Criminal Police Congress, held in Monaco in 1914. This event brought diplomats and legal officials from two dozen countries to discuss international collaboration in criminal investigations, the sharing of investigative techniques, and extradition procedures.^[14] The Monaco Congress outlined twelve principles that would eventually form the foundation of Interpol, such as establishing direct communication between police forces in different countries, creating international standards for forensics and data collection, and streamlining the process for handling extradition requests. However, the idea of an international police organization remained inactive during the First World War. In 1922, the United States attempted a similar initiative through the International Police Conference in New York City, but it failed to garner international support.^[15]

A year later, in 1923, a new initiative was undertaken at another International Criminal Police Congress in Vienna, spearheaded by Johannes Schober, President of the Viennese Police Department. The 22 delegates agreed to found the International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC), the direct forerunner of Interpol, which would be based in Vienna. Founding members included police officials from Austria, Germany, Belgium, Poland, China, Egypt, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Japan, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland and Yugoslavia.^[16] The same year, wanted person notices were first published in the ICPCs International Public Safety Journal. The United Kingdom joined in 1928.^[17] By 1934, the ICPC's membership more than doubled to 58 nations.. The United States did not join Interpol until 1938, although a U.S. police officer unofficially attended the 1923 congress.^[18]

Following the [Anschluss](#) in 1938, the Vienna-based organization fell under the control of Nazi Germany; on November 29, 1941, Interpol had offices at *Am Kleinen Wannsee 16*,^[19] the commission's headquarters were eventually moved to Berlin in 1942.^[20] Most member states withdrew their support during this period.^[16] From 1938 to 1945, the presidents of the ICPC included Otto Steinhäusl, Reinhard Heydrich, Arthur Nebe and Ernst Kaltenbrunner. All were

General	
Regulations	[1] [2]
Operational structure	
Headquarters	Lyon , France
Multinational agency	
Nationalities of personnel	130 (2024)
Agency executives	Valdecy Urquiza , Secretary-General Ahmed Naser Al-Raisi , President Sarka Havrankova , Garba Baba Umar , Valdecy Urquiza , Vice Presidents
Facilities	
National Central Bureaus	196
Website	
interpol.int (https://interpol.int)	
Languages (4)	[show]

generals in the [Schutzstaffel](#) (SS); Kaltenbrunner was the highest-ranking SS officer executed following the [Nuremberg trials](#).

In 1946, after the end of [World War II](#), the organization was revived as the International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO) by officials from Belgium, France, [Scandinavia](#), the United States and the United Kingdom. Its new headquarters were established in Paris, then from 1967 in [Saint-Cloud](#), a Parisian suburb. They remained there until 1989 when they were moved to their present location in [Lyon](#).

Until the 1980s, Interpol did not intervene in the prosecution of [Nazi war criminals](#) in accordance with Article 3 of its [Charter](#), which prohibited intervention in "political" matters.^[21]

On May 10, 2023, [Operation Identify Me](#) was launched.^[22]

Constitution

The role of Interpol is defined by the general provisions of its constitution.^[1]

Article 2 states that its role is:

1. To ensure and promote the widest possible mutual assistance between all criminal police authorities within the limits of the laws existing in the different countries and in the spirit of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#).
2. To establish and develop all institutions likely to contribute effectively to the prevention and suppression of ordinary law crimes.

Article 3 states:

It is strictly forbidden for the Organization to undertake any intervention or activities of a political, military, religious or racial character.

Operating procedures

Contrary to the common idea due to frequent portrayals in popular media, Interpol is not a [supranational law](#) enforcement agency and has no agents with arresting powers. Instead, it is an international organization that functions as a network of law enforcement agencies from different countries.^{[23][24]} The organization thus functions as an administrative liaison among the law enforcement agencies of the member countries, providing communications and database

assistance, mostly through its central headquarters in Lyon,^[25] along with the assistance of smaller local bureaus in each of its member states.

Interpol's databases at the Lyon headquarters can assist law enforcement in fighting international crime.^[26] While national agencies have their own extensive crime databases, the information rarely extends beyond one nation's borders. Interpol's databases can track criminals and crime trends around the world, specifically by means of authorized collections of fingerprints and face photos, lists of wanted persons, DNA samples, and travel documents. Interpol's lost and stolen travel document database alone contains more than 12 million records. Officials at the headquarters also analyze this data and release information on crime trends to the member countries.

An encrypted Internet-based worldwide communications network allows Interpol agents and member countries to contact each other at any time. Known as I-24/7, the network offers constant access to Interpol's databases.^[26] While the National Central Bureaus are the primary access sites to the network, some member countries have expanded it to key areas such as airports and border access points. Member countries can also access each other's criminal databases via the I-24/7 system.

Interpol issues eight types of [Interpol notices](#), seven of which are: red, blue, green, yellow, black, orange, and purple. An eighth special notice is issued at the special request of the [United Nations Security Council](#).^[27] As of 2019, there were 62,448 valid Red and 12,234 Yellow notices in circulation.^[28]

In the event of an international disaster, terrorist attack, or assassination, Interpol can send an Incident Response Team (IRT). IRTs can offer a range of expertise and database access to assist with victim identification, suspect identification, and the dissemination of information to other nations' law enforcement agencies. In addition, at the request of local authorities, they can act as a central command and logistics operation to coordinate other law enforcement agencies involved in a case. Such teams were deployed eight times in 2013. Interpol began issuing [its own travel documents](#) in 2009 with hopes that nations would remove visa requirements for individuals travelling for Interpol business, thereby improving response times.^[29] In September 2017, the organization voted to accept [Palestine](#) and the [Solomon Islands](#) as members.^[30]

Finances

In 2019, Interpol's operating income was €142 million, of which 41 percent were statutory contributions by member countries, 35 percent were voluntary cash contributions and 24 percent were in-kind contributions for the use of equipment, services and buildings.^[28] With the goal of enhancing the collaboration between Interpol and the private sector to support Interpol's missions, the Interpol Foundation for a Safer World was created in 2013. Although legally

independent of Interpol, the relationship between the two is close enough for Interpol's president to obtain in 2015 the departure of [HSBC](#) CEO from the foundation board after the [Swiss Leaks](#) allegations.^[31]

From 2004 to 2010, Interpol's [external auditors](#) was the French Court of Audit.^{[32][33]} In November 2010, the Court of Audit was replaced by the [Office of the Auditor General of Norway](#) for a three-year term with an option for a further three years.^{[34][35]}

Offices

In addition to its General Secretariat headquarters in Lyon, Interpol maintains six regional bureaus and three special representative offices:^[36]

- [Buenos Aires](#), Argentina
- [Brussels](#), Belgium (special representative office to the [European Union](#))
- [Yaoundé](#), Cameroon
- [Abidjan](#), Côte d'Ivoire
- [San Salvador](#), El Salvador
- [Addis Ababa](#), Ethiopia (special representative office to the [African Union](#))
- [Nairobi](#), Kenya
- [New York City](#), United States (special representative office to the [United Nations](#))^[a]
- [Harare](#), Zimbabwe

Interpol's Command and Coordination Centres offer a 24-hour point of contact for national police forces seeking urgent information or facing a crisis. The original is in Lyon with a second in Buenos Aires added in September 2011. A third was opened in Singapore in September 2014.^[37]

Interpol opened a Special Representative Office to the UN in New York City in 2004^[38] and to the EU in Brussels in 2009.^[39]

The organization has constructed the Interpol Global Complex for Innovation (IGCI) in Singapore to act as its [research and development](#) facility, and a place of cooperation on digital crimes investigations. It was officially opened in April 2015, but had already become active beforehand. Most notably, a worldwide takedown of the SIMDA botnet infrastructure was coordinated and executed from IGCI's Cyber Fusion Centre in the weeks before the opening, as was revealed at the launch event.^[40]

Leadership

Secretaries General

Presidents

Paul Dickopf (1968–1972)

Under the Nazi government of [Adolf Hitler](#), [Paul Dickopf](#) was a member of the [National Socialist German Students' League](#), [Sturmabteilung](#) and the [Schutzstaffel](#) before and during [World War II](#).

Dickopf was elected as the president of Interpol in 1968, apparently aided by the good contacts of [François Genoud](#) to the Arab world.^{[41][42]} While his former Nazi connections were known, he maintained his post until 1972.^[43]

Jackie Selebi (2004–2008)

After being charged of corruption in January 2008, [Jackie Selebi](#) resigned as president of Interpol and was put on extended leave as National Police Commissioner of South Africa.^[44]

In July 2010 Selebi was found guilty of corruption by the [South African High Court](#) in Johannesburg for accepting bribes worth €156,000 from a drug trafficker.^[45]

Khoo Boon Hui (2008–2012)

Jackie Selebi was temporarily replaced by [Arturo Herrera Verdugo](#), the National Commissioner of [Investigations Police of Chile](#) and former vice president for the American Zone, who remained acting president until the appointment of Singaporean [Khoo Boon Hui](#) in October 2008.^[46]

Mireille Ballestrazzi (2012–2016)

On November 8, 2012, the 81st General Assembly closed with the election of Deputy Central Director of the [French Judicial Police](#), [Mireille Ballestrazzi](#), as the first female president of the organization.^{[47][48]}

Meng Hongwei (2016–2018)

In November 2016, [Meng Hongwei](#), a politician from the [People's Republic of China](#), was elected president during the 85th Interpol General Assembly, and was to serve in this capacity until 2020.^[49]

At the end of September 2018, Meng was reported missing during a trip to China, after being "taken away" for questioning by discipline authorities.^{[50][51][52]} Chinese police later confirmed that Meng had been arrested on charges of bribery as part of a national anti-corruption

campaign.^[53] On October 7, 2018, INTERPOL announced that Meng had resigned his post with immediate effect and that the Presidency would be temporarily occupied by Interpol Senior Vice-president (Asia) [Kim Jong Yang](#) of South Korea.

Kim Jong Yang (2018–2021)

On November 21, 2018, Interpol's General Assembly elected [Kim Jong Yang](#) to fill the remainder of Meng's term,^[54] in a controversial election which saw accusations that the other candidate, Vice President [Alexander Prokopchuk](#) of Russia, had used Interpol notices to target critics of the Russian government.^[55]

Four American senators had accused Vice President [Alexander Prokopchuk](#) of abusing [Red Notices](#), likening his election to "putting a fox in charge of the henhouse".^[56] A statement posted by the [Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union](#) and signed by other NGOs raised concerns about his ability to use his Interpol position to silence Russia's critics.^[57] Russian politicians criticized the U.S. accusation as politically motivated interference.^[58]

Ahmed Nase Al-Raisi (2021 –)

On November 25, 2021, [Ahmed Naser Al-Raisi](#), inspector general of the United Arab Emirates's interior ministry, was elected as president. The election was controversial due to the UAE's human rights record, with concerns being raised by some human rights groups (e.g. [Human Rights Watch](#)) and some MEPs.

In June 2021, 35 French Parliamentarians, Members of Parliament and Senators, including from the majority and the opposition, urged President [Emmanuel Macron](#) to oppose the candidacy of the UAE's General [Ahmed Nasser Al-Raisi](#), citing the accusations of torture against him. It was the second appeal by the deputy of the Rhône, [Hubert Julien-Laferrière](#), who had first written to Macron earlier in 2021. He questioned how a profile like Al-Raisi's, who was responsible for the torture of political opponent [Ahmed Mansoor](#) and of a British academic [Matthew Hedges](#), can become the president of a most respectable institution.^{[59][60]}

While the UAE was arranging trips for Al-Raisi to Interpol's member countries, opposition against the Emirati candidate amplified. A number of [German](#) MPs signed a petition to express "deep concern" and reject the candidacy of Al-Raisi for the post of Interpol director.^{[61][62]} Rodney Dixon, the British lawyer of Matthew Hedges and Ali Ahmad, submitted a complaint and urged the Swedish authorities to arrest Al-Raisi upon his arrival in [Sweden](#).^{[63][64]} The two Britons also raised a similar request to arrest al-Raisi with the Norwegian police authorities. Both Sweden and [Norway](#) apply jurisdiction that allows them to open investigations of crime, irrespective of a person's nationality or the origin country of the crime.^[65]

In October 2021, Al-Raisi had to face further opposition, as the lawyers submitted a complaint to the French Prosecutor in Paris. The claims cited Al-Raisi's role in the unlawful detention and

torture of Ali Issa Ahmad and Matthew Hedges. Filed under the principle of universal jurisdiction, the complaint gave French officials the authority to investigate and arrest foreign nationals. As Raisi is not a head of state, French authorities had all the rights to arrest and question him on entering the French territory.^[66]

As the General Assembly was approaching, the opposition was rising. In November 2021, a Turkish lawyer Gulden Sonmez filed a criminal complaint against Al-Raisi's nomination in Turkey, where the vote was to take place. Sonmez said the Emirates' attempt to cover its human rights records and to launder its reputation.^[67] Besides, Hedges and Ahmad were also expected to file a lawsuit in Turkey against Al-Raisi, ahead of the General Assembly.^[68]

Criticism



Former Interpol President [Meng Hongwei](#) pleaded guilty for accepting bribes over 14.5 million yuan.^[69]

Abusive requests for Interpol arrests

Despite its politically neutral stance, some have criticized the agency for its role in arrests that critics contend were politically motivated.^[70] In their declaration, adopted in Oslo (2010),^[71] Monaco (2012),^[72] Istanbul (2013),^[73] and Baku (2014),^[74] the [OSCE Parliamentary Assembly \(PACE\)](#) criticized some OSCE member States for their abuse of mechanisms of the international investigation and urged them to support the reform of Interpol in order to avoid politically motivated [prosecution](#). The resolution of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe of 31 January 2014 criticizes the mechanisms of operation of the Commission for the Control of Interpol's files, in particular, non-adversarial procedures and unjust decisions.^{[75][76]} In 2014, PACE adopted a decision to thoroughly analyse the problem of the abuse of Interpol and to compile a special report on this matter.^[77] In May 2015, within the framework of the preparation of the report, the PACE Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights organized a hearing in [Yerevan](#), during which both representatives of NGOs and Interpol had the opportunity to speak.^[78]

According to [Freedom House](#), Russia is responsible for 38% of Interpol's public Red Notices.^[79] There currently are "approximately 66,370 valid Red Notices, of which some 7,669 are public."^[80]

Refugees who are included in the list of Interpol can be arrested when crossing the border.^[81] In the year 2008, the office of the [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees](#) pointed to the problem of arrests of refugees on the request of INTERPOL^[82] in connection with politically motivated charges.

In 2021, Turkey,^[83] China, the United Arab Emirates, Iran, Russia, and Venezuela were accused of abusing Interpol by using it to target political opponents.^[84] China used Interpol against the [Uyghurs](#), where the government issued a Red Notice against activists and other members of the ethnic minority group living abroad.^[85] Since 1997, 1,546 cases from 28 countries of detention and deportation of the Uyghurs were recorded.^[86] In the case of Turkey, Interpol had to turn down 800 requests,^[87] including one for NBA basketball player [Enes Kanter](#) [Freedom](#).^[88] The UAE was also accused as one of the countries attempting to buy influence in Interpol. Using the Interpol Foundation for a Safer World, the Arab nation gave donations of \$54 million. The amount was estimated as equal to the statutory contributions together made by the rest 194 members.^[89] It was asserted that the Emirates' growing influence over Interpol gave it the opportunity to host the General Assembly in 2018 and in 2020 (that was postponed due to the [COVID-19 pandemic](#)).^[85]

World

Organizations such as [Detained in Dubai](#), [Open Dialog Foundation](#),^[90] [Fair Trials International](#),^[81] [Centre for Peace Studies](#),^[91] and [International Consortium of Investigative Journalists](#),^[92] indicate that non-democratic states use Interpol to harass opposition politicians, journalists, human rights activists, and businessmen. The countries accused of abusing the agency include China, Russia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Iran, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Venezuela, and Tunisia.^{[90][81][92][93]}

The [Open Dialog Foundation](#)'s report analysed 44 high-profile political cases which went through the Interpol system.^[90] A number of persons who have been granted refugee status in the [European Union](#) (EU) and the US—including Russian businessman [Andrey Borodin](#),^[94] Chechen Arbi Bugaev,^[95] Kazakh opposition politician [Mukhtar Ablyazov](#)^[96] and his associate Artur Trofimov,^[97] and Sri Lankan journalist Chandima Withana^[98]—continue to remain on the public INTERPOL list. Some of the refugees remain on the list even after courts have refused to extradite them to a non-democratic state (for example, Pavel Zabelin,^[99] a witness in the case of [Mikhail Khodorkovsky](#), and [Alexandr Pavlov](#),^[100] former security chief of the Kazakh oppositionist [Ablyazov](#)). Another case is [Manuel Rosales](#), a politician who opposed [Hugo Chavez](#) and fled to [Peru](#) in 2009 and was subject to a red alert on charges of corruption for two weeks. Interpol deleted the request for prosecution immediately.^[101] Interpol has also been criticized for

mistaking people on yellow alerts. One case was Alondra Díaz-Nuñez, who in April 2015 was apprehended in [Guanajuato City](#), Mexico being mistaken for a missing American teenager.^[102] Interpol came under heavy criticism from Mexican news and media for helping out [Policía Federal Ministerial](#), [Mexican Federal Police](#), and the U.S. Embassy and Consulate in Mexico, in what was believed to be a [kidnapping](#).

Eastern Europe

The 2013 PACE's Istanbul Declaration of the OSCE cited specific cases of such prosecution, including those of the Russian activist Petr Silaev, financier [William Browder](#), businessman Ilya Katsnelson, Belarusian politician [Ales Michalevic](#), and Ukrainian politician [Bohdan Danylyshyn](#).

On 25 July 2014, despite Interpol's Constitution prohibiting them from undertaking any intervention or activities of a political or military nature,^[103] the Ukrainian nationalist paramilitary leader [Dmytro Yarosh](#) was placed on Interpol's international wanted list at the request of Russian authorities,^[104] which made him the only person wanted internationally after the beginning of the [2014 Russian military intervention in Ukraine](#). For a long time, Interpol refused to place former President of Ukraine [Viktor Yanukovych](#) on the wanted list as a suspect by the new [Ukrainian government](#) for the mass killing of protesters during [Euromaidan](#).^{[105][106]} Yanukovych was eventually placed on the wanted list on 12 January 2015.^[107] However, on 16 July 2015, after an intervention of Joseph Hage Aaronson, the British law firm hired by Yanukovych, the international arrest warrant against the former president of Ukraine was suspended pending further review.^[108] In December 2014, the [Security Service of Ukraine](#) (SBU) liquidated a sabotage and reconnaissance group that was led by a former agent of the Ukrainian Bureau of INTERPOL that also has family relations in the Ukrainian counter-intelligence agencies.^[109] In 2014, Russia made attempts to place Ukrainian politician [Ihor Kolomoyskyi](#) and Ukrainian civic activist [Pavel Ushevets](#), subject to criminal persecution in Russia following his pro-Ukrainian art performance in Moscow, on the Interpol wanted list.^[110]

On October 30, 2023, Belarusian filmmaker [Andrey Gnyot](#) got arrested when he landed in [Belgrade](#) as he was put on an Interpol warrant list. He is accused by the Belarusian authorities of tax evasion and issued an extradition request.^[111] During the [2020–2021 Belarusian protests](#), Gnyot co-founded the Free Association of Athletes (SOS-BY), bringing together athletes opposed to the Lukashenko regime. He spent seven months in detention in Belgrade before being transferred to house arrest in June 2024. [Amnesty International](#) called on the Serbian authorities to cease the extradition process.^[112]

Middle East

According to a report by the [Stockholm Center for Freedom](#) that was issued in September 2017, Turkey has weaponized Interpol mechanisms to hunt down legitimate critics and opponents in violation of Interpol's own constitution. The report lists abuse cases where not only arrest

warrants but also revocation of travel documents and passports were used by Turkey as persecution tools against critics and opponents. The harassment campaign targeted foreign companies as well.^[113] Syrian-Kurd [Salih Muslim](#) was briefly detained at Turkey's request on 25 February 2018 in [Prague](#), the capital of the [Czech Republic](#),^[114] but was released 2 days later, drawing angry protests from Turkey.^[115] On 17 March 2018, the Czech authorities dismissed Turkey's request as lacking merit.

After a senior UAE government official, [Ahmed Naser Al-Raisi](#) became the President, Interpol ignored an injunction by the [European Court of Human Rights](#) (ECHR), and cooperated with Serbian authorities to extradite a Bahraini activist. Ahmed Jaafar Mohamed Ali was extradited to Bahrain in a charter aircraft of [Royal Jet](#), a private Emirati airline headed by an Abu Dhabi royal family member. Critics raised concerns that it was just first example of how "red lines will be crossed" under the presidency of Al-Raisi. Besides, a warning was raised that after its decision, Interpol will be complicit in any abuse that Ali will face.^[116] In 2021 it was reported that Ahmed Naser had also allegedly tortured a number of people in the UAE before.^[117]

Appeals and requests withdrawals

The procedure for filing an appeal with Interpol is a long and complex one. For example, the Venezuelan journalist [Patricia Poleo](#) and a colleague of Kazakh activist Ablyazov, and Tatiana Paraskevich, who were granted refugee status, sought to overturn the politically motivated request for as long as one and a half years, and six months, respectively.^{[118][119][120]}

Interpol has previously recognized some requests to include persons on the wanted list as politically motivated, e.g., Indonesian activist [Benny Wenda](#), Georgian politician [Givi Targamadze](#),^[121] ex-president of Georgia [Mikheil Saakashvili](#),^[122] ex-mayor of [Maracaibo](#) and 2006 Venezuelan presidential election candidate [Manuel Rosales](#) and ex-president of Honduras [Manuel Zelaya Rosales](#);^[123] these persons have subsequently been removed. However, in most cases, Interpol removes a Red Notice against refugees only after an [authoritarian](#) state closes a criminal case or declares [amnesty](#) (for example, the cases of Russian activists and political refugees Petr Silaev, Denis Solopov, and Aleksey Makarov, as well as the Turkish sociologist and feminist [Pinar Selek](#)).^{[124][125][126][127]}

Diplomacy

In 2016, [Taiwan](#) criticized Interpol for turning down its application to join the General Assembly as an observer.^[128] The United States supported Taiwan's participation, and the [US Congress](#) passed legislation directing the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to obtain observer status for Taiwan.^[129]

The election of Meng Hongwei, a Chinese national, as president and [Alexander Prokopchuk](#), a Russian, as vice president of Interpol for Europe drew criticism in anglophone media and raised fears of Interpol accepting politically motivated requests from China and Russia. [\[130\]](#)[\[131\]](#)[\[132\]](#)

Business

In 2013, Interpol was criticized over its multimillion-dollar deals with such private sector bodies as [FIFA](#), [Philip Morris](#), and the pharmaceutical industry. The criticism was mainly about the lack of transparency and potential conflicts of interest, such as [Codentify](#). [\[133\]](#)[\[134\]](#)[\[135\]](#)[\[136\]](#)[\[137\]](#)[\[138\]](#) After the [2015 FIFA scandal](#), the organization has severed ties with all the private-sector bodies that evoked such criticism, and has adopted a new and transparent financing framework.

Reform

From 1 to 3 July 2015, Interpol organized a session of the Working Group on the Processing of Information, which was formed specifically in order to verify the mechanisms of information processing. The Working Group heard the recommendations of civil society as regards the reform of the international investigation system and promised to take them into account, in light of possible obstruction or refusal to file crime reports nationally. [\[139\]](#)

The Open Dialog Foundation, a human rights organization, recommended that Interpol, in particular: create a mechanism for the protection of rights of people having international refugee status; initiate closer cooperation of the Commission for the Control of Files with human rights NGOs and experts on asylum and extradition; enforce sanctions for violations of Interpol's rules; strengthen cooperation with NGOs, the UN, OSCE, the PACE, and the European Parliament. [\[140\]](#)

[Fair Trials International](#) proposed to create effective remedies for individuals who are wanted under a Red Notice on unfair charges; to penalize nations which frequently abuse the Interpol system; to ensure more transparency of Interpol's work. [\[141\]](#)

The [Centre for Peace Studies](#) also created recommendations for Interpol, in particular, to delete Red Notices and Diffusions for people who were granted refugee status according to [1951 Refugee Convention](#) issued by their countries of origin, and to establish an independent body to review Red Notices on a regular basis. [\[91\]](#)

Emblem



Interpol emblem

The current emblem of Interpol was adopted in 1950 and includes the following elements:^[3]

- the globe indicates worldwide activity
- the olive branches represent peace
- the sword represents police action
- the scales signify justice
- the acronyms "OIPC" and "ICPO", representing the full name of the organization in both French and English, respectively.

Membership

Members

Interpol currently has 196 member countries:^[142]

Interpol members

[\[show\]](#)

Subnational-bureaus

 American Samoa

 Anguilla

 Bermuda

 British Virgin Islands

 Cayman Islands

 Gibraltar

 Hong Kong

 Montserrat

 Macau

 Puerto Rico

 Turks and Caicos Islands

 United Nations for  Kosovo^{[144][145]}

Exclusions

Two member states of the United Nations and three partially-recognized states are currently not members of Interpol: [North Korea](#) and [Tuvalu](#), as well as [Kosovo](#), [Taiwan](#), [Western Sahara](#), and [Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan](#).

The Republic of China (Taiwan) joined Interpol in September 1961. After the People's Republic of China was [seated as "China"](#) in the UN, Interpol transferred its recognition from the ROC to the PRC in September 1984.^[146]

In 2023, over 60 Interpol member states voiced their support for Taiwan's bid to re-join the organization. Specifically, representatives from Taiwan's diplomatic allies [Eswatini](#), [Palau](#), [Paraguay](#), [Belize](#), [Saint Vincent and the Grenadines](#), the [Marshall Islands](#), and [Saint Kitts and Nevis](#) spoke up for Taiwan during the assembly.^[147]

See also



- [Cybercrime](#)
- [Europol](#), a similar EU-wide organization.
- [Intelligence assessment](#)
- [International Criminal Court](#)
- [Interpol notice](#)
- [Interpol Terrorism Watch List](#)
- [Interpol Travel Document](#)
- [InterPortPolice](#)
- [Operation Identify Me](#)
- [UN Police](#)

Explanatory notes

- a. Interpol also maintains a liaison office to the [United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime](#) in [Vienna](#)

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External links

-  Media related to [Interpol](#) at Wikimedia Commons
- [Official website](https://interpol.int) (<https://interpol.int>) 
- [INTERPOL Foundation for a Safer World](https://www.interpolfoundation.org/) (<https://www.interpolfoundation.org/>)